



# Walk Friendly Communities

## COMMUNITY REPORT CARD AND FEEDBACK:

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Louisville, Kentucky  
April 25, 2011

### Introduction

Thank you for submitting an application to the Walk Friendly Community program on behalf of Louisville, Kentucky! A Walk Friendly Community is a city or town that has shown a commitment to improving walkability and pedestrian safety through comprehensive programs, plans and policies.

Each application was evaluated by at least three reviewers to provide a fair assessment of your community and provide technical feedback on how to improve the walkability of your community.

After thorough consideration of your application, we are unable to designate Louisville as a Walk Friendly Community. However, we would like to give Louisville an Honorable Mention, based on several outstanding areas. Of these areas, there were several that we were particularly impressed with, including:

- Louisville has widespread support for pedestrian issues, evidenced by the number of city employees whose primary duties are devoted to walkability or pedestrian safety issues as well as a Pedestrian Advisory Board and dedicated advocacy groups.
- The Complete Streets Plan for Louisville is impressive and seems to be implemented to a large degree.
- The Parking Policies, which include maximum parking standards, parking location requirements, pedestrian supportive design requirements, shared parking allowances, and priced public parking, are also noteworthy in Louisville, particularly due to the fact that all of the policies, taken together, support pedestrian transportation in a comprehensive way.
- Louisville supports walking through excellent education and encouragement initiatives, including safety campaigns for both pedestrians and drivers, public service announcements, Walk to Work Days, and others, while the Mayor's Hike and Bike events indicate top down support for walking in the community.
- It is clear from the engineering standards and engineering infrastructure in Louisville, which include model sidewalk design specifications, substantial pedestrian

infrastructure on bridges, and widespread use of innovative pedestrian treatments, that the desire to create an environment conducive to walking is present.

Louisville has exhibited a desire to become a community that supports active transportation. Unlike many other communities, Louisville has demonstrated the desire to and has made a significant effort to improve walkability and health in the community. You have made some excellent progress, supporting complete streets, requiring sidewalks, encouraging walking through events, and creating a pedestrian-friendly environment through infrastructure.

Despite those positive elements, we have noted several areas in which your community can improve its policies, programs, and standards. Please continue to build upon this foundation to work to become a Walk Friendly Community. This report card provides detailed feedback on how your community can take it to the next level; take the time to review the feedback and contact us with any questions.

## Primary Recommendations

This section identifies and provides suggestions for the most vital areas of improving Louisville's overall walkability. Additional details are provided in the following sections. **We recommend that you read these areas thoroughly and develop clear goals, benchmarks, funding sources, and an implementation schedule for reaching these goals.**

- One good first step would be to develop and adopt a **dedicated pedestrian plan**, including a position for a pedestrian coordinator. You have many good programs in your community. A dedicated plan, with clear goals and realistic/measurable outcomes, can coordinate these efforts and bring your programs to the next level.
- With walking increasing in Louisville according to the US Census, the city should focus on **increasing the sidewalk coverage** on both arterials and non-arterials. Research has shown that more sidewalks can increase safety and encourage walking. Paving more sidewalks will demonstrate Louisville's commitment to walking and create a more pedestrian-friendly city.
- **Expanding the educational opportunities** and SRTS program, as well as offering **additional training to staff**, would go a long way. The town also needs to reach out to different professionals regarding ADA issues.
- Finally, your community should continue to **develop an ongoing count program** to determine the levels of walking in Louisville. Counts will play a big part in pre-/post-evaluations of projects, which should be incorporated as well.

## Feedback by Section

This remainder of this report card will provide detailed feedback and suggestions for each section in the community assessment tool. Feedback will include research to support the importance of this question as well as tools, guides, and case studies of successful implementations in other communities.

Each section received an overall score as defined below:

- **Walk Friendly:** The responses in this section indicate that your community is particularly strong in this area with great efforts being made towards improving walkability. Even so, there are always areas within this section where improvements and growth could be made.
- **On the Right Track:** This score indicates that your community does not exhibit the characteristics to be truly walk friendly in this section, but that there are still good existing programs or new programs that could be expanded. Please review our suggestions on how you could improve the walkability in this area.
- **Needs Attention:** This score indicates that your community does not yet demonstrate strong programs, policies, and results, characteristic of a Walk Friendly Community based on the responses in this section. Please review our suggestions carefully on how you can create positive change in your community with both short- and long-term objectives.

## Community Profile

### Walk Friendly

- Louisville exhibits an excellent commitment to pedestrian safety, made evident through staff commitment and designated committees and advisory boards. One opportunity for improvement would be to designate a full-time pedestrian coordinator. Check out the report [Why Communities & States Need Bicycle and Pedestrian Staff](#).

## Status of Walking

### On the Right Track

- The mode share for walking exceeds national averages. It is also good to see a system for counts, though more detail on frequency and location of counts would be helpful. In terms of encouraging walking, Louisville has succeeded based on the increase in walking from 1990 to 2000. For reference, many online [resources](#) can be helpful in making the case for walking.
- The crash data reveals a relatively high crash rate, especially in terms of injury rates. Though fatalities are low, the City is experiencing demonstrated pedestrian safety problems.
- This response shows that the City is aware of overall trends in pedestrian safety, as well as some of the issues that might contribute to crashes. Especially promising is the identification of night-time crashes as a focus area. These tend to be more severe, especially when coupled with speeding concerns. Speeds should be added to the list of target areas.

## Planning

### On the Right Track

- While you have general planning documents, creating a dedicated pedestrian plan with concrete deadlines would be a helpful way of prioritizing and implementing pedestrian facilities in Louisville (the [How to Develop a Pedestrian Safety Action Plan](#) guide could be helpful). A pedestrian plan indicates that a community considers pedestrian safety and walkability to be a high priority.

- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 requires public agencies with more than 50 employees to develop and implement an ADA transition plan. The purpose of a transition plan is to make the agency's facilities and programs universally accessible. The plans should be regularly updated so that communities continue to ensure the accessibility of publicly maintained facilities. Providing accessible facilities improves safety and access for all populations, not just individuals with disabilities. Creating a stand-alone ADA transition plan with a time line for implementing improvements will improve accessibility. In addition, requiring ADA compliance with all new development and creating an evaluation schedule will help to prioritize maintenance and new construction. The resource, [Checklist for Accessible Sidewalks and Street Crossings](#) can provide more information.
- This is an impressive level of public involvement, especially the survey and advisory committee. Consider reaching out specifically to individuals with disabilities, who need to be represented in the planning process and the development of ADA transition plans. Also consider including health professionals or related advocacy groups in your stakeholder groups. Our websites can provide some helpful [resources](#) on public input.
- Consider a policy for retrofitting sidewalks and filling in network gaps. This could be done by first creating an inventory of existing facilities, overlaying pedestrian crashes and common routes/destinations, and then using those findings to identify the high-priority areas. Seattle, Washington, clearly lays out their factors for prioritizing sidewalk improvements in this [document](#). The [Greensboro, North Carolina](#), sidewalk ordinance could be another helpful example.
- There is a lot that can be done by requiring new developments to connect with existing pedestrian facilities. Connectivity is a key principle in planning and designing for pedestrian safety, and is explained further in these [guidelines](#).
- The number of trails cited is impressive. However, it seems that more can be done to provide connectivity to these trails from the downtown residential and commercial areas. This could be accomplished by providing incentives to encourage the construction of trails that provide links. The [Rails to Trails Conservancy](#) and the FHWA's [Designing Sidewalks and Trails for Access](#) could be helpful here.
- While the service miles per capita and performance are excellent, it seems that more could be done to provide transit access to residential areas, as only about a third of the population lives within an easy walking distance to a transit stop. Consider the amenities around your transit stops, as well as the accessibility and ADA compliance. It might be helpful to refer to the [Pedestrian Safety Guide for Transit Agencies](#) for more information and guidance.
- These are excellent parking policies. Implementing a park and ride system could be very helpful, especially considering that a large number of residences are not within walking distance to transit stops. This [resource](#) could be helpful in terms of finding innovative solutions for parking issues.
- Consider both density bonuses and school siting policies. Creating incentives for high-density development, especially near transit corridors, could improve ridership and provide a boost to your infill development numbers. More information about density bonuses can be found [here](#).
- These Form District requirements are excellent, and provide many of the amenities required for a walkable environment. Consider extending some of these requirements beyond your downtown and traditional marketplace corridors to transit stops that might exist outside of this area. These requirements might also be included in any

incentives you provide for higher-density development. This [case study](#) can provide helpful information.

## Education & Encouragement

### Walk Friendly

- Louisville seems to have taken the first steps toward a successful child education program, utilizing school-based programs at various schools. More could be done to promote SRTS activities among other schools, based on low participation percentages. One good first step is to have schools participate in data collection using the national Center for Safe Routes to School's [student travel tallies and parent surveys](#). This might reveal walking trends, and help the school system target educational programs. Combine those results with your walkability assessments to determine some of the barriers to walking/bike to school.
- Providing City staff with background knowledge on pedestrian safety issues can be very helpful, especially for those individuals whose work directly impacts pedestrian safety. Engineers, planners, law enforcement, health professionals, educators, and decision makers all have a role to play in providing safe places to walk. Consider the [Designing for Pedestrian Safety webinar series](#) as a required viewing for planners and engineers. Be sure to train bus drivers on pedestrian safety issues, and how they can contribute to safety around transit stops. Law enforcement officers should receive training on local pedestrian safety laws, and how these laws apply to both drivers and pedestrians. More training opportunities are available [here](#).
- Louisville has done an excellent job with educational and encouragement campaigns. Take the next step and plan a [Car Free event](#) by closing down a section of roadway for biking, walking, and jogging - this can help bring more attention to active transportation. Also, be sure to revise your safety messages if new issues are revealed by routine examination of crash data. For example, if more crashes occur among older pedestrians, tailor your messages to that population.
- Having the Mayor's support for designated walking routes is encouraging. Consider linking the routes and wayfinding with transit locations to increase ridership. This [case study](#) can provide an example of how wayfinding can contribute to active living.

## Engineering

### On the Right Track

- There certainly needs to be a focus on expanding/connecting the sidewalk network. It is good to see that 60 miles are planned for the next three years. An inventory of existing facilities, along with other factors such as pedestrian crashes, destinations, transit stops, etc., can help the City prioritize locations for improvements and sidewalk construction. This [resource](#) could be helpful.
- It is good to see that there is a system for installing curb ramps - is this based on an existing inventory? Though a call-in system is good, it would be nice to show that these concerns are documented in a central location, verified with a citywide inventory database, and prioritized for improvements. The model you have created for conducting

walkability assessments is very good, and it ensures community involvement. The City of Seattle has an excellent [website](#) that covers its system of prioritizing sidewalk improvements.

- It is good to see such a relatively high percentage of intersections with pedestrian countdown signals. Pedestrian [signalization](#) is an important component of a walkable environment. Requiring new road or sidewalk construction and any sidewalk maintenance to include pedestrian signals (audible and vibrotactile warnings as well) will be particularly important for creating a pedestrian-friendly street network and encouraging people to walk. In addition, reducing the average walk speed and implementing right-turn-on-red restrictions can also yield positive safety benefits and encourage less mobile pedestrians to walk more.
- Overall, the City should reexamine the pedestrian crash data to determine if midblock crossings are warranted in particular areas. You could incorporate some high-visibility crossing treatments, such as HAWKs or flashing beacons, to enhance safety at these crossings. The newest update to the [Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices](#) provides a number of innovative treatments to support walking.
- These are good basic road construction policies. For a description of how these types of treatments can be improved for pedestrian safety, take a look at the countermeasure descriptions within the [PEDSAFE: Pedestrian Safety and Countermeasure Selection Guide](#).

## Enforcement

### On the Right Track

- Focusing enforcement efforts toward increasing yielding to pedestrians is a big step towards creating a walk friendly community.
- It is good to see that the police are highlighting their activities in the media, and are involved in two of these types of initiatives. If the City does install more midblock crossings, it would be worth combining these elements (progressive ticketing and media campaigns) with a decoy operation to ensure motorist compliance with yielding laws. Examples of this type of [program](#) in New Jersey might be helpful.
- It is important that local law enforcement recognize the need to enforce yielding laws at intersections and crosswalks, as well as parking laws that can improve pedestrian and motorist visibility. This [list](#) of unsafe pedestrian and motorist behaviors can help law enforcement officials target certain types of enforcement strategies.
- Excellent amount of attention given to security issues; particularly the coverage of street lighting is impressive. You'll want to make sure that those lights are well-maintained, and it is also worth exploring LED and white lighting technologies, since those can sometimes provide better visibility for motorists and conspicuity for pedestrians.
- There is not a lot of detail on the training of crossing guards, or the equipment they are required to use. Consider developing standard requirements for crossing guards, based on these [guidelines](#) from the National Center for Safe Routes to School.
- There are many tools available to law enforcement professionals for selecting locations for enforcement. One of the best systems is the [Data Driven Approaches to Crime and Traffic Safety \(DDACTS\)](#), developed by NHTSA. This system involves overlaying crime data layers with crash data, to identify locations that are both high-crime, high-crash, for enforcement. This results in a more efficient deployment of resources.

- It is good to see that police are working closely with engineers and planners. It is important to review recent crashes, conduct audits of problem locations, and come up with recommendations for improvements. These can be based on the [Pedestrian Road Safety Audit Guidelines](#). I would recommend overlaying your crash maps with crime data, as recommended in the DDACTS system, to create general target locations for enforcement. For your crosswalk stings, be sure to combine those with education and media campaigns to increase knowledge of pedestrian safety laws.

## Evaluation

### On the Right Track

- Information is needed about the frequency of counts (How many years have these been conducted? How often? Have any trends come out of these?). Consider expanding your counts to locations that are experiencing high numbers of crashes, since there is often pedestrian activity beyond Downtown.
- The use of Pedestrian LOS and walkability checklists is good to see - especially the application of a Louisville-specific walkability assessment, described earlier. The [Pedestrian Intersection Safety Index](#) is a valuable tool that can assist the City with evaluating its intersections for pedestrian safety. The [Pedestrian Road Safety Audits](#) can allow the City to systematically review problem areas and make recommendations for future improvements.
- Evaluating road projects is a critical step in planning and designing for pedestrian safety. Without knowledge of the effectiveness of certain programs, the City will not know how its efforts are impacting pedestrian safety. The guide "[How to Develop a Pedestrian Safety Action Plan](#)" includes a section on how to incorporate evaluation into your plan - it is valuable information for a community that is working toward the development of a pedestrian plan.

## More Information

If you have questions or comments regarding this feedback, your community's initiatives and programs, or the application process in general, we'd like to hear from you. Please contact:

Carl Sundstrom, 919-843-4963, [sundstrom@hsrnc.unc.edu](mailto:sundstrom@hsrnc.unc.edu)

Dan Gelinne, 919-962-8703, [gelinne@hsrnc.unc.edu](mailto:gelinne@hsrnc.unc.edu)

You can also send general inquiries to [info@walkfriendly.org](mailto:info@walkfriendly.org)